Mr. James Greve
Richard B. Russell Memorial Library
The University Libraries
The University of Georgia
Athens, Ga. 30062

7627 Old Receiver Road
Frederick, Md. 21701
11/25/89

Dear Mr. Greve

I write to amplify Dave Wrone's letter of the 19th and the 11/9/89 story from the Athens Observer. But first my apologies for my typing. I must sit with my legs elevated, which has the typewriter to one side and my face too close to the keyboard.

Until his death Senator Ruseell encouraged my research and criticism of the Warren Report. He said several times he regretted not being able to find the time to help me. Our contact was by letters, visits to his office and by phone with his staff.

I'd known that he and Senator Cooper had raised questions about parts of the Report and that an executive session was convened to resolve those questions. When I was finally able to see a copy of the supposed transcript of that session, 9/18/64, I knew immediately that it was a phony. In time I was able to prove beyond question that no transcript had been made at all.

In the 1930s I'd been an investigator and then the editor of a subcommittee of what then was known as the Committee On Education and Labor. We used the court reporting firm of Ward & Paul. The Commission also used it. As soon as I looked at the first page I knew it had not been provided by that firm and I was reasonably certain that no such firm had. They all charge by the page, so they all use pica type and wide margins with double-spacing. This increases what they can charge for their services. There was no dialogue at all in the following pages. The result is that if any busy Senator or member of his staff glanced at the first page it would have been assumed that the document was a transcript of that session and without any interest in it when received it would merely have been filed. If any had been distributed and I have no reason to believe that any was. I am certain from his reaction that Senator Russell had never seen it.

My belief is that the whole thing was the contrivance of J. Lee Rankin, general counsel and formerly as I now recall Solicitor General of the U.S.

Knowing of the Senator's doubts I phoned his office and left a message and was phoned back and invited in. Senator Russell was quite disturbed because not having the transcript he believed had been made he had no record for history of the doubts he expressed and the reasons for them. He wanted me to be certain that there was no other version, no actual transcript. I obtained that proof from the National Archives, which had the Commission's records, and gave it to him. I then went farthur and got both the Commission's records of its court-reporting services and the records of Ward & Paul. Although the Senator had been led to believe that the court reporter was present and taking it all down, Ward & Paul had not been asked to provide one and none was present. Rankin had a staff member pretend to be the court reporter. I've published pretty much of this, including facsimiles of the Ward & Paul and Commission records.

One day as I walked with the Senator to the elevator and then rode with him to the Capitol on the subway he told me several things you may find of interest and I repeat for archival purposes. One is that "they," meaning, pretty clearly the FBI and CIA, had not "told us all they know about Oswald." He was 100% correct in this.

Another is how LBJ placed him on the Commission and why. LBJ had phoned Russell about serving on it and I'm not now clear in my recollection but I think also asked him to come to the White House. As they discussed it the Senator came to believe that he had talked LBJ out of appointing him. But he learned from the next day's news that he had been appointed. He told me that LBJ had done this to keep him from leading the fight of the South against civil-rights legislation. "But I fooled him," the Senator told me, because he did lead that fight and gave less time to the Commission. In fact he was the

least active member.

He also had had doubts about Marina Oswald's testimony and it is he who forced the final interrogation of her, about September 6, in Texas. What she then told him and the others about what the FBI had done to her, verbatim in my first book, also is 100% correct from the FBI's own records - obtained by Freedom of Information Act litigation.

In this regard those who use your archive may be interested in knowing that in all I obtained about a third of a million pages under FOIA, that they are available to anyone now at my home and eventually will be a public archive at Local Good College.

I had to use FOIA to get most of them but I also got and make available all but one of the Commission's executive session transcripts. To any who want to get a clear picture of the Commission when it expected permanent secrecy the one I publish in Post Mortem is by far the shortest and the most informative about the Commission and how it worked. Senator Russell was not present that day. The Commission decided to destroy all records of it, paid Ward & Paul the niggardly sum of $25 for having a reporter present, but the stenotypist's tape escaped the memory hole and under threat of another FOIA lawsuit the archives had it transcribed not by War & Paul but at the Pentagon, where a few errors were made.

The Observer story is correct in reflecting his substantial doubts about the official version of the shooting. What the Senator told me is that he did not demand any changes in the language. Instead he asked for what he described as " a little footnote" saying only that he did not agree with that language. Because the Commission, and I am confident this means Warren and Rankin mostly, wanted unanimity the passage in the first chapter was rewritten and as explained to him with his objections in mind. In practise he was deceived and the conclusions remained essential as they were when he objected to them. That first chapter was written to serve also as the Commission's press release and it is, in fact, what AP used as its story on the Report.

There can be no doubt about the intent to deceive and mislead Senator Russell and I am convinced that after he had and read what I gave him he came to the same conclusion. I am not absolutely certain but it is my recollection that he at least in part attributed this to LBJ and I believe he never had any further contact with LBJ.

It was after he had the information I gave him and when he knew he was dying that he went public on Cox Broadcasting.

The Senator was in charge of intelligence oversight. My recollection of what he said about those agencies is not clear enough to even paraphrase but I am certain that he did not trust them at all, in general and with regard to the Commission's work.

Mr. Wilkes may or may not want to change the public record he made in saying that it was "loyalty" that led the Senator to sign the Report and remain silent. I do think, if I may say so, that students in the future ought have access to the actualities. In this regard I note that I have not received any complaint about a word I published relating to this matter from anyone, including any official or former staff or Commission member.

The inventor of the so-called single-bullet theory that was intended to make it appear that there was only one shooter and no conspiracy, which is what Senator Russell objected of, is now a Senator, Arlen Specter.

I went into that theory in great detail in two FOIA lawsuits and the evidence I filed was not rebutted. No effort was made to rebut, in fact. FOIA was amended in 1974 to make FBI, CIA and similar files available under FOIA over the first of these lawsuits. This is explicit in the Senate part of the legislative history and is stated in the Congressional Record, where the suit is referred to as against the appeals court. My name is stated and I'd lost up to and including the Supreme Court. All the litigation records will be included in the archive I leave.

cc Wilkes

I had some correspondence with Mr. Wilkes in 1984

Harold Weisberg

Best wishes,
Harold Weisberg